



Tom Barrett
Mayor, City of Milwaukee

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Mayor Tom Barrett Hosts 3rd Annual Infant Mortality Summit: *Changing the Social Determinants of Health*

MILWAUKEE - Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett and the City of Milwaukee Health Department hosted the third annual Infant Mortality Summit today. This year's theme was "Changing the Social Determinants of Health." More than 300 business leaders, social service providers, healthcare professionals, and residents gathered at the Italian Conference Center to explore the connections between social and economic factors such as jobs and early childhood education, and how they affect birth outcomes.

"Some of the most important drivers of infant deaths are social and economic factors that contribute to the health and well-being of our mothers and babies," said Mayor Barrett. "Things like jobs, education, and the neighborhoods we live in, all have a long-term impact on our health. These factors affect the health of women, starting long before they reach childbearing age. And they also affect the health of men, and their abilities to be involved, supportive fathers."

This year's summit featured keynote speeches by **Dr. Anthony Iton** of the California Endowment Healthy Communities Initiative, and **Dr. Magda Peck**, founding Dean of the Joseph J. Zilber School of Public Health at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. **Dr. Sheri Johnson**, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics for the Center for the Advancement of Underserved Children at the Medical College of Wisconsin, served as the Master of Ceremonies.

Breakout sessions led by subject matter experts focused on a social or economic issue and its impact on birth outcomes. Topics covered during breakout sessions led by leading experts included: Early Education and Childcare, Income-related Policies, Healthy Neighborhoods, and Employment. A public policy workshop provided an overview of how legislation is created and changed.

Milwaukee Health Department figures, not yet verified by the State, indicate that in 2011, 100 infants died in Milwaukee prior to their first birthday, which is the second-lowest number of infant deaths in Milwaukee history. Because infant mortality rates can bounce around from year to year, experts here and elsewhere prefer to look at three-year rolling averages. From 2009-2011, Milwaukee's overall infant mortality rate was 10.2, which was improved compared to the previous three-year overall rate of 10.4.

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The 2009-2011 Milwaukee three-year rates by race and ethnicity are as follows: 5.0 for Caucasians, 8.0 for Hispanic babies, and 14.5 for African Americans. This means that Hispanic babies in Milwaukee die at a rate 60% higher than White babies, and, worse, that our Black infant mortality rate is nearly three times the White rate.

The Presenting Sponsor for the summit was Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare. Supporting Sponsors were Children's Community Health Plan, United Way of Greater Milwaukee, United Healthcare Community Plan, and Molina Healthcare.

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